small and marginal farmers and for advancing loans to farmers indebted to non-institutional lenders.

Under NABARD's guidelines to co-operative banks and Regional Rural Banks for OTS for small and marginal farmers, loans outstanding of the identified farmers whose accounts have been categorised as NPAs as on 31st March, 2001 are covered. Interest on their balance outstanding after 31st March, 2001 is to be waived. Any credit to the account after 31st March, 2001 is accounted towards payment of settlement amount.

Guidelines have been issued to Banks to provide relief to the farmers indebted to non-institutional sources provide for advancing loans against appropriate collateral or group security for debt redemption.

No specific allocation has been made for either of the two purposes. However, an amount of Rs. 756.83 crore was settled during 2004-05 by banks towards OTS for small and marginal farmers and Rs. 57 crore was sanctioned by commercial banks during 2004-05 to 16758 farmers indebted to non-institutional lenders.

Powers of Appellate Tribunals to Award Costs

2166. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunals do not have power to award costs;

(b) if so, whether it is proposed to empower them with suitable powers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S. S. PALANIMANICKAM) : (a) Yes Sir. There is no specific power in the statute for awarding of cost.

(b) to (d) No such proposal is under consideration.